



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kanawha County Car Dealer Agrees to Honor Free Gas Offer

Attorney General Darrell McGraw announced today that his office had entered into an agreement with Bert Wolfe Ford Porsche Audi & Toyota, a car dealership located in Charleston, West Virginia. As often happens in these kinds of cases, the local dealership was approached by an out-of-state marketing company with the idea of a "free gas" sales promotion. In September, 2008, the marketing company mailed Bert Wolfe Ford Porsche Audi & Toyota customers a flyer on the dealership's behalf that stated the consumers had won a car, cash prizes or a card redeemable for \$450.00 in gas at participating service stations. Consumers were instructed to take the solicitation to the dealership to find out what they had won. Consumers who "won" the \$450 gas card quickly discovered there were strings attached.

Instead of receiving a gas card valued at \$450.00, consumers were given a voucher to complete and mail to FreeGasCentral.com. They were also required to pay a \$5.00 refundable activation fee and wait up to 6 weeks for their voucher to be processed. Only then did consumers discover that in order to obtain their "free" gas, they first had to purchase \$100.00 of the same brand of gas and send their receipts to FreeGasCentral.com. For every \$100.00 worth of receipts they mailed to FreeGasCentral.com within a given month, they received a \$25.00 gift card. In other words, consumers had to spend \$1,800 in order to receive the full value of the offer.

"It is unlawful to advise consumers that they have won something and tie any other requirements to the receipt of the prize," stated Attorney General McGraw. "All the hoops consumers had to jump through to get their free gas were stated in the fine print – a clear violation of the West Virginia Consumer Credit and Protection Act." However, as soon as Bert Wolfe Ford Porsche Audi & Toyota was advised by the Attorney General's Office that this particular promotion violated West Virginia's Consumer Protection laws, the dealership immediately acknowledged its mistake; agreed to make full restitution to its customers; and cooperated fully with our office. The Attorney General's Office applauds the dealership's quick action and commitment to honor the terms of its sales promotion.

Bert Wolfe Ford Porsche Audi & Toyota has made arrangements with two gas stations in the Charleston area to provide \$450.00 in gas to consumers who file complaints with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by July 10, 2009. In order to qualify for relief under this settlement, consumers must have received the free gas card promotion from Bert Wolfe Ford Porsche Audi & Toyota in September 2008, must provide proof that they paid the \$5.00 activation fee to FreeGasCentral.com, and must file a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division on or before July 10, 2009. Consumers who meet these requirements will receive a gift card from Bert Wolfe Ford Porsche Audi & Toyota with a value of \$450.00 that will be redeemable at either of two (2) Charleston gas stations.

"Consumers must always be wary of offers for free gifts and remember that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," warns Attorney General McGraw. Consumers may request forms to file complaints with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by calling 1-800-368-8808 or download a complaint form at www.wvago.gov.

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